

Resident Education Through Blogging and Other Social Media Platforms

At the University of Utah Family Medicine Residency Program, we were very interested to read the article by Khadpe and Joshi¹ regarding the use of blogs in graduate medical education (GME). Two years ago our residency program started publishing Family Medicine Vital Signs, the first family medicine (FM) residency blog in the nation.²

Our blog fills several critical roles in our residency program. First, writing a blog entry addressing an area of passion in FM teaches residents advocacy skills and supports the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education training milestones for professionalism, and interpersonal and communication skills. Second, the blog endorses the program's core missions of supporting FM advocacy and training future physician leaders in the specialty. Third, the blog provides a platform that allows residents and faculty to share personal and professional experiences as trainees, practitioners, and educators. Many submissions have shared personal stories that reflect on such topics as the professional roles of a physician, meaning and purpose in medicine, and the human experience in medicine. Multiple Family Medicine Vital Signs posts have subsequently been picked up by KevinMD.com and other medical blogs.

In addition to our residents and faculty participants, we have invited guest bloggers from the University of Utah and nationally to write on FM topics of importance. The blog has included a series from FM leaders around the country addressing the question, "Why (not) family medicine?" Many of these posts covered the joys of practicing in FM, while others focused on the future of health care and the place of FM in this future system. These posts provided a contextual view regarding FM's role in providing current and future leaders in our health care system.

Participation in the University of Utah FM blog is a requirement for our residents. The posts are reviewed

by a social media editorial board composed of FM residency faculty and residents. This review process ensures that delicate and controversial issues are addressed in an appropriate and respectful manner. The board has been critical to the successful implementation and function of our social media efforts. We strongly encourage a similar oversight group for other GME programs considering developing a social media presence.

The Family Medicine Vital Signs blog has provided rich learning and writing opportunities for our residents and faculty. We recommend that all GME programs consider the value of developing a similar social media project.

Kyle Bradford Jones, MD, FAAFP

Assistant Professor (Clinical), Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of Utah School of Medicine

Osman Sanyer, MD

Associate Professor (Clinical), Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of Utah School of Medicine

Katherine Fortenberry, PhD

Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Assistant Professor (Clinical), Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of Utah School of Medicine

Sonja Van Hala, MD, MPH, FAAFP

Associate Professor (Clinical), Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of Utah School of Medicine
Family Medicine Residency Director, University of Utah

References

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2. University of Utah Family Medicine Residency. Family Medicine Vital Signs (blog). <https://fammedvitalsigns.wordpress.com>. Accessed January 11, 2017.